

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) <b>(16-05-2006)</b>		2. REPORT TYPE <b>FINAL</b>		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Holistic Operational Art: a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Roadmap for Achieving Strategic and Operational Alignment and Success.</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)  <b>C. Adam Kijek</b>  Paper Advisor (if Any): <b>Dr. Chisholm</b>				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Office of the Provost Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT  In the post-Vietnam War era, the United States Military plans and fights with the mindset of achieving theater-strategic and operational objectives through Quick Decisive Victories (QDV's). Fueled by massive advancements in technology, this strategy has lead to impressive battlefield victories, but it has failed to achieve the sought after strategic end-states. The difference between winning the wars and winning the battles can be traced to misapplication of operational art. Theater commanders have failed to focus on a holistic view of the war and the desired end-state. Instead, the focus has been on achieving almost purely military objectives that form one piece of the overall theater strategic picture. Operation Iraqi Freedom is a textbook example of this poorly applied operational art. By examining how United States Central Command concentrated on the objective of regime change instead of the strategic end-state of a free and stable Iraq, several new and unique lessons learned can be found. With this new perspective of holistic operational art, a quick discussion of Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE with respect to space, time and force will provide a roadmap for future operations. Finally, several recommendations are provided for implementing holistic operational art.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS UNCLASSIFIED					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: UNCLASSIFIED		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>21</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept	
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED		19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556	

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**Holistic Operational Art**

***A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Roadmap for Achieving Strategic and Operational Alignment and Success***

**By**

**Adam Kijek**

**LCDR USN**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**19 May 2006**

## **ABSTRACT**

In the post-Vietnam War era, the United States Military plans and fights with the mindset of achieving theater-strategic and operational objectives through Quick Decisive Victories (QDV's). Fueled by massive advancements in technology, this strategy has lead to impressive battlefield victories, but it has failed to achieve the sought after strategic end-states. The difference between winning the wars and winning the battles can be traced to misapplication of operational art. Theater commanders have failed to focus on a holistic view of the war and the desired strategic end-state. Instead, the focus has been on achieving almost purely military objectives that form one piece of the overall theater strategic picture. Operation Iraqi Freedom is a textbook example of this poorly applied operational art. By examining how the United States Central Command concentrated on the objective of regime change instead of the strategic end-state of a free and stable Iraq, several new and unique lessons learned can be found. With this new perspective of holistic operational art, a quick discussion of Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE with respect to space, time and force will provide a roadmap for future operations. Finally, several recommendations are provided for implementing holistic operational art.

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Operational Art: Current vs. Holistic	2
III. Operation Iraqi Freedom Analysis	4
IV. Holistic Operational Art & Factors Space, Time and Force	10
V. Conclusion	14
VI. Recommendations	15
Bibliography	18

## INTRODUCTION

The United States' ability to rapidly employ a small, agile and lethal force, grounded training and technology, was showcased in the opening of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Unfortunately, this dominating battlefield performance was designed to secure specific objectives not to ensure a stable Iraq<sup>1</sup>. To effectively fight the wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, theater strategic commanders must change their focus from specific objectives to holistic operational art focused on achieving the desired strategic end-states.<sup>2</sup> The planning for OIF provides a textbook example of mistaking objectives for an end-state and failing to understand a holistic picture of the battle space. Instead of planning for a free, secure and stable Iraq, Central Command focused on regime change and finding weapons of mass destruction. These objectives were critical to the success of the war; however, their achievement should not have been the focus. Clausewitz stated, “The political objective is the goal, war is the means of reaching it....”<sup>3</sup> As an instrument of policy, war encompasses many facets outside of military action. Military commanders at the theater strategic level of war must think beyond military objectives; they must employ holistic operational art to be successful. After discussing current and holistic operational art in the context of OIF, a simple examination of how holistic operational art ties into space, time and force will be detailed. With this framework, Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE will then be examined to show the benefits of the holistic process. Finally, two recommendations will be put forward to help bridge the gap between current and holistic operational art.

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 28.

<sup>2</sup> The term desired strategic end state may be used interchangeably with desired end state and strategic end state in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

## OPERATIONAL ART: CURRENT vs. HOLISTIC

### Current Operational Art

Joint Doctrine defines operational art as:

The employment of military forces to attain strategic and /or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration, and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles. Operational art translates the joint force commander's strategy into operational design, and, ultimately, tactical action, by integrating the key activities at all levels of war.<sup>4</sup>

In practice, this definition has come to mean the integration of military forces to accomplish operational objectives. It has excluded a continuous focus on achieving the strategic end state through the use of all elements of national power. The main reason for this loss of overall situational awareness comes from an emphasis on the objectives themselves. There is an enormous drive to ensure that objectives are clear and attainable; in fact, current joint planning doctrine demands it.<sup>5</sup> As commanders look over plans and try to discern a way ahead, it becomes easy to substitute a physical objective for the end-state. While this mindset is certainly conducive for parts of the overall planning process, the use of objective-driven operational art at the theater strategic level of war is fundamentally flawed. By focusing on specific military objectives, commanders and planners fail to maintain a holistic view of the war, and the focus turns to battles.<sup>6</sup> This focus on battles causes the regressive planning process to start from a specific objective instead of the desired end-state. This problem is further compounded by the use of objectives to mark the start and end points for phases of operations and campaigns. Current planning emphasizes a linear progression of

---

<sup>4</sup> Norman Wade, *The Joint Forces Operational & Warfighting SMARTbook: Guide to Joint Doctrine, Operational Warfighting & Theater/Campaign Planning* (Lakeland: The Lightning Press 2003), 8-31.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Joint Pub 3-0 (Washington D.C: 10 September 2001), III-6.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Antulio Echevarria, "Principles of War or Principles of Battle" pub. in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, Anthony McIvor ed. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 58.

phases; this leads commands to become absorbed with the need to complete the objective and by default the phase to keep the overall plan on track. In the fog and friction of war, the completion of an objective may in reality signal something different than what the original plan had described. With the focus on the objective itself, the larger effects and consequences in regard to the end state are missed or misdiagnosed. This can lead to catastrophe because the importance of an event is framed by its operational significance not its strategic significance.

### **Holistic Operational Art**

Holistic operational art is defined as:

The employment of all elements of national power to attain strategic and /or theater strategic end states through the design, integration, synchronization and conduct of strategies, campaigns and major operations. Holistic operational art seeks to translate national policy into operations and actions that are coordinated across the full spectrum of United States war fighting capabilities. It produces efficient, holistic plans that adapt to the situation.

While today the emphasis is on the military component, holistic operational art seeks a balance in which the theater commander weighs all avenues of national power against each other. Based on the desired end state, this method may produce a plan that employs military troops to accomplish purely economic or diplomatic objectives. The goal is to open up as many options as possible for the commander to employ. If situational awareness of the end state is always predominant, a commander may find economic, social, or diplomatic courses of action opening as operations are planned and executed. In addition to providing a greater paradigm, a holistic view does not constrain phases to a linear progression. In order to ensure the continuous proper alignment of goals with the end state, phases may take place in any sequence, concurrently or be stopped and restarted. As forces in the battle space interact, actions are measured against their projected effects to see what changes need to occur. At all

times, the pace and direction of operations is dictated by trying to find the most efficient method to reach the desired end state.

To successfully use holistic operational art, regressive planning must start from the desired end-state with a full spectrum of options all coordinated to achieve victory. Planners must prepare actions with the knowledge that all elements of national power interact in the battle space, and their synergistic use can produce much more dramatic effects than military action alone. Combat power will play a significant role in future wars; but it may need to be a complimentary part of the plan based on the circumstances of the conflict.

### **Globalization and Its Effects on Warfare**

Globalization continues to knit new and complex links between the different countries and regions of the Earth. The world is now flat, and this new connectedness plays an increasingly larger role not only in economics but politics and social interactions as well.<sup>7</sup> The conduct of war or Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will require more sophisticated plans based, in part, on the ties formed by Globalization. If a holistic view is not maintained in future operations, the links of Globalization could produce tremendous unintended consequences. As an example, an intra-state action directed against a failed regime could turn into a major regional war due to economic or social factors that are not readily apparent.

### **OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM ANALYSIS**

The legacy of Vietnam is one of the most lasting and tangible influences on how the United States Military plans and fights wars. Due to real and perceived lessons learned from Vietnam, the military has used the notion of “Quick Decisive Victory” (QDV) as the basis

---

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 201.

for formulating operations. This mindset demands that objectives be clearly described and attainable.<sup>8</sup> After the objectives are defined, the U.S. would position overwhelming force and use its speed, lethality and mass to quickly defeat the enemy, achieve its objective and go home. This concept was proven during the first Persian Gulf War, and the coalition victory gave tremendous credence to QDV's as the basis for future American strategy. In the war's aftermath, the United States military continued to focus on more efficient and cheaper ways to attain QDV's through advancements in technology and training. The policy of Transformation came to describe the effort to achieve greater battlefield effects more quickly with a smaller more nimble force.<sup>9</sup> The advantage of this design is to exponentially increase speed, maneuver and lethality while driving down costs. Objective-driven planning was now combined with a focus on the speed in which a small force could achieve its given objectives. This methodology ensures efforts are concentrated on battles and not wars. Operation Enduring Freedom seemed to prove the concept of these small lethal strikes, and Operation Iraqi Freedom was meant to follow on that success.

### **Initial Iraq War Planning**

United States Central Command was responsible for the initial Iraqi concept of operations brief to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld. During the briefing, Gen. Tom Franks put forth what Central Command identified to be the end-state. Gen. Franks noted, “I flipped a page and pointed to ENDSTATE (sic), and to two red-highlighted starbursts: REGIME CHANGE and WMD REMOVAL.”<sup>10</sup> The end-state that Gen. Franks had identified was not a stable Iraq centered on political, military, economic and other conditions. The theater-strategic command charged with formulating a comprehensive war plan had produced two

---

<sup>8</sup> JP 3-0, GL-14.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon and Trainor, 25.

<sup>10</sup> General Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 331.

objectives with strategic consequences. The completion of these two objectives did not equate to a stable Iraq. This misidentification of an end state limited the commanders' paradigm to a fraction of the total picture and ensured that combat operations consumed the planning phase.

If a holistic view of operational art were used, planning would have begun with the end-state of a stable Iraq that posed no threat to the rest of the world. This was the strategic end-state as declared by President Bush at the onset of hostilities in March 2003.<sup>11</sup> The holistic planning concept demands more attention be given to political, economic and social factors. As the Regional Combatant Commander (RCC), Gen Franks was well versed in all these differing factors with respect to not only Iraq but the entire Middle Eastern region. Joint Doctrine explicitly states, "Successful military operations may not, by themselves, achieve the desired strategic end state. Military activities...need to be integrated and synchronized with other instruments of national power"<sup>12</sup> As a combatant commander, Gen. Franks' purview was the strategic to theater strategic level of war. His view of the war needed to be overarching with synchronization of national assets as his number one priority. However, much like ADM Yamamoto at the Battle of Midway, he became consumed by the military operational details instead of maintaining a bigger theater strategic picture. Combatant commanders or theater strategic commanders must act as the bridge between national strategic goals and the military means used to achieve them. They must maintain a greater than military operations paradigm.

---

<sup>11</sup> President George W. Bush, "President Bush Addresses the Nation" (Washington D.C.: White House, 19 March 2003). <http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/print/20030319-17.html> [05 May 2006]

<sup>12</sup> JP-3.0, I-4.

The tendency to focus on purely military matters is not easy to avoid. This mindset reverts to the mentality spawned from Vietnam of ensuring QDV's. Gen. Franks stated,"...if the President ordered me to go to war, I wanted to do it at a time and in a manner that gave our troopers the best chance of accomplishing their mission fast, with the fewest possible casualties."<sup>13</sup> This noble ideal is part of the mentality of all military leadership: both uniformed and civilian. From the military perspective, it is accomplished through the use of decisive force against clear objectives and can be done quickly at the operational level. This is not necessarily the way in which strategic end states are achieved. The accomplishment of objectives does not directly translate into setting the desired end state. If a win-and-get-home mentality is employed, the likelihood of mistaking objectives for the end state to decrease the length of the operation is much greater.

As the invasion of Iraq drew closer, Central Command continued to focus on combat operations instead of the larger strategic picture for Iraq. As the Regional Combatant Commander, Gen. Franks' responsibility included not only Iraq but Operation Enduring Freedom and the rest of the Middle East. Instead of appointing a Coalition Task Force Commander to run OIF, Gen. Franks maintained that duty himself. This was another major indication that theater-strategic command was not thinking of the holistic picture of Iraq and the region. It was consumed with Iraqi operations and objectives. In fact, Gen. Franks noted:

"On March 17, two days before D-Day, I had faxed a "letter of concern" to Rumsfeld's deputy, Paul Wolfowitz. Although I couched the message in polite terms, its intent was blunt: Keep Washington focused on policy and strategy. *Leave me the hell alone to run the war.*"<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Franks, 373.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 440

CENTCOM had eschewed the responsibility for integrating all elements of national power. This statement makes clear that Gen. Franks' thoughts and actions resided on the operational level; his focus was not on the war but the battles to be fought. War cannot be separated from strategy, and combatant commanders reside on a strategic level of authority. Since the strategic end state had been replaced by specific objectives, situational awareness was missing at the theater strategic level. This meant there was a gap in assessing the outcome of actions and how they affected the ability to produce a stable Iraq. This self-setting trap led to several missed opportunities as the war progressed.

### **Pitfalls of Not Using Holistic Operational Art**

As OIF transitioned from planning to execution, the U.S. Army and Marine forces movement through Iraq encountered heavy resistance from Fedayeen forces. This was a much different situation than the scripted plan of Iraqis welcoming the Coalition as liberators. The battle at Samawah was one example of this less-than-friendly reception by an unplanned foe.<sup>15</sup> As information about this type of resistance filtered back up to Central Command, it was not quickly identified as a threat that could change the face of the war. Central Command was consumed with objectives, and their reaction showed an operational vice theater-strategic focus.

“At CENTCOM, despite the appearance of Fedayeen on the battlefield, the focus was still on the threat the command had scripted before the war: Iraq’s Republican Guard, its army units, and the prospect that they would employ chemical or biological weapons. Franks pressed his officers to be aggressive and press ahead.”<sup>16</sup>

In the face of this new threat on the battlefield, CENTCOM continued to focus on speed of advance and quickly knocking out the regime. Holistic operational art would have demanded these attacks be put into context of a stable Iraq. The threat posed by the Fedayeen was not

---

<sup>15</sup> Gordon and Trainor, 222.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 260.

a uniquely military one and demanded great attention. This development should have led to a paradigm shift on how to combat insurgents using all elements of national power. Along with the military factors, an insurgent force also needs to be viewed in political and social contexts. Instead of demanding an analysis of what the Fedayeen could portend in context of a stable Iraq, an objective focused commander had a different view. “We are where we want to be,’ Franks assured his officers. ‘Move to accelerate.’”<sup>17</sup> CENTCOM had discounted the appearance of a totally unexpected and fundamentally different type of enemy in the drive to capture Baghdad and remove Saddam. This demonstrates just how dangerous an objective-focused mentality can be. Theater-strategic thinking must continuously be consumed by how operations and developments affect a properly identified strategic end state.

### **Problems Caused by Objective-Focused Operational Art**

The drive to Baghdad and subsequent battle which put the city under Coalition control was an outstanding military operation. The evolution of the U.S. military to a smaller, faster more lethal force produced a tremendous battlefield success. The aftermath of this success has become and will continue to be an issue for intense debate. As major combat operations came to a close, stability and reconstruction efforts were set to begin. However, these were not the objectives that had been so meticulously planned for by the CENTCOM team. A stable Iraq was not the strategic end state that had been identified early in the planning process. The issue of fierce Fedayeen fighting and resistance was not put in context to the bigger theater-strategic picture. These issues suddenly came to the forefront. The planned objective had been reached, and there was no clear, concise and identified

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 261. This is a quote of Gen. Franks taken from an unspecified person’s copy of a VTC transcript.

objective to replace it. This meant that time was needed to figure out a way ahead. It was time that the Coalition did not have. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute noted:

Wasting those precious first weeks and months gave this third group-the fence sitters-a perceived rationale to take up violence too. With the security environment and the economy both stagnant, dissatisfaction grew, and the resistance thus had more potential recruits to draw upon.<sup>18</sup>

From a combat operations perspective, Iraqi Freedom is an unqualified success. At the theater strategic level of war, there was a failure to support the desired strategic end state identified by President Bush. This problem is systemic of the military's quest to focus on objectives instead of the end-state. At the theater-strategic level, commanders and their planners must continually evaluate all aspects of national power, realize the effects of combat operations on both objectives and the end state, and not fall into the trap of defaulting to purely military operations. As the world continues to get smaller through technology and countries come together under Globalization, warfare will become more complex with a greater number of unintended consequences. To combat this changing threat, holistic operational art must become the new standard for thought and planning. Achieving objectives only tells a small piece of the puzzle, and the conclusions drawn from their completion can change based on a myriad of factors.

### **HOLISTIC OPERATIONAL ART & FACTORS SPACE, TIME AND FORCE**

Operation Iraqi Freedom highlights how current operational art interacts with the factors: space, time and force. During the operation, there was a tremendous desire to understand the operational battle-space so an overwhelming force could be brought to bear in a minimal amount of time to achieve certain objectives. This concept predicates itself on operational art acting as a function that happens almost exclusively in the realm of military

---

<sup>18</sup> Michael O'Hanlon, "Iraq without a Plan," *Policy Review*, December 2004.  
<http://www.policyreview.org/dec04/ohanlon.html>[06 May 2006]

concerns. Holistic operational art ensures all elements of national power are focused on the strategic end state. Theater strategic commanders must be aligned to this level of thinking and use it to examine space, time and force.

### **Holistic Space**

Today, planners mainly concern themselves with how to overcome large pieces of space with respect to fighting and logistics. This view needs to be expanded to include a more comprehensive picture of all the factors that affect the strategic end state. As Milan Vego of the Naval War College notes, “Physical space covers land, sea, and airspace...In addition, legal, political, ethnic, or religious conditions considerably influence the use of physical space.”<sup>19</sup> These additional influences need to drive how planners consider space in proportion to issues like logistical needs and operational reach. Prior to the Iraq War, CENTCOM was concerned with how factor space affected the establishment of a Northern Front. When Turkey finally denied access to Northern Iraq, a good understanding of how space affected future movements was displayed.<sup>20</sup> Yet, even this concept of space was focused on military effects. Holistic operational art would have included a much larger focus on the space of Iraq itself. A better understanding of how the different internal cultures and religious groups interacted and overlapped may have lead to different decisions with regard to the war plan. The reaction to the U.S. presence was not going to be homogenous. Also, outside of the oil wells, how did the physical infrastructure of the country function? Was there a political or social system which could be adopted to help with the transition to a new government? These questions help to feed a theater strategic view that

---

<sup>19</sup> Milan N. Vego, *Operational Warfare* (Newport: U.S. Naval War College, 2000), 33.

<sup>20</sup> Franks, 429. The discussion centered around the 4<sup>th</sup> ID being left in the Mediterranean Sea as a decoy or moved around through the Suez Canal, back into the Persian Gulf and into Kuwait.

answers how to stabilize Iraq after Saddam. They may have been asked, but Central Command was focused on space as a function of combat and an obstacle to forward speed.

### **Holistic Time**

As previously discussed, operational art today seeks to minimize the amount of time operations take. The notion of a QDV is fed by the continuing desire to increase the speed and effects of an operation and decrease the time. This notion has merit in tactical and operational planning; but there are pitfalls to transplanting it onto the strategic level of war. Holistic operational art views time in a much more relative framework which is designed to create an end state. Joint doctrine states, "The fundamental principle of employment of US joint forces is to commit decisive force to ensure achievement...while concluding operations in the shortest time possible and on terms favorable to the United States"<sup>21</sup> Time as measured in this statement should be based on creating favorable terms for the United States. This means creating the most efficient way to reach desired end state; it should not be interpreted as finding the fastest way to reach the capital. A holistic view of time is much more concerned with how the issues of society, culture, economics, politics and demographics are going to interact with elements of U.S. national power in the long term to achieve victory. This overarching view of time will help to keep operations in perspective and help to ensure that fast military combat actions are aligned with both objectives and the end state.

### **Holistic Force**

Transformation guided by modern technology has changed the classical view of force. Force is no longer defined as a concentration of a large number troops and weapons; it is now defined by the effects that can be delivered by relatively fewer platforms. With all of the advancements in weaponry, a much small number of troops can now deliver the same

---

<sup>21</sup> JP 3-0, ix.

effect which used to demand greater numbers. This evolving technology has led to force being thought of almost entirely as something delivered by military means. There have also been many advances in “non-kinetic” types of force; however, their use still resides in an objective focused planning scheme. As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century continues, force must be expanded to include social, economic and political effects as well as combat effects. Theater strategic commanders must understand how the use of all forces can interact to cause the completion of an objective and/or an end state. In addition, there may be times when holistic operational art calls for holding back force during war. If the end-state is served by this to the neglect of a specific objective, the commander and his team have achieved a holistic picture.

### **UNIFIED ASSISTANCE: Holistic Operational Art in Terms of Space, Time and Force**

In December 2004, Indonesia was hit by a magnitude 9 earthquake that decimated the Aceh region of Sumatra. In response to this humanitarian disaster, the United States Pacific Command stood up Combined Support Force (CSF) 536 to handle Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE (UA).<sup>22</sup> This joint, interagency, multinational, and non-governmental support force came together under the command of LtGen. Robert Blackman, Commander III Marine Expeditionary Force. The efforts of this support force were instrumental in the saving of lives, limiting of disease and support to an Indonesian government that was unable to handle a crisis of such magnitude. The outstanding integration, synchronization and understanding of space, time and force made UA a tremendous success in holistic terms.

In terms of space, CSF 536 was able to conquer the vast distances involved in getting aid and support from around the world to the tsunami victims. CSF 536 understood space in

---

<sup>22</sup> “Operation Unified Assistance: Aiding Tsunami Victims.” *Code One: An Airpower Projection Magazine.* <[http://www.codeonemagazine.com/archives/2005/articles/apr\\_05/operations/index.html](http://www.codeonemagazine.com/archives/2005/articles/apr_05/operations/index.html)> [07 May 2006].

terms of all the different cultures, legalities and interplay of foreigners that needed to occur to facilitate operations on Indonesian soil. They also took into account local rebels who were at odds with the Indonesian government. With regard to time, CSF 536 responded in a judicious manner and was smart to take the time to set the right conditions in all aspects of the operation. The pace was urgent enough to get help to victims quickly, but it was also measured enough to help coordinate all of the nations and activities. Finally, they were able to coordinate many different means of “force” to provide as close to maximum positive effect as possible. This outstanding holistic approach produced a tremendous success. This success can be measured by viewing American popularity in the opinions of the Indonesian people. A BBC poll showed that before UA, seventy percent of the Indonesian population had a negative view of America. After the operation, seventy percent of the Indonesian population had favorable views of America.<sup>23</sup> This is holistic operational art personified: the understanding of how all factors influence a conflict and using all elements of national power to help in achieving the desired end state. The goodwill engendered from UA is also a metric for overall success in the Global War on Terrorism. By using all elements of national power, we changed the perception of the world’s largest Muslim nation.

## CONCLUSION

Objective-driven planning has unintentionally caused theater strategic commanders to lose focus on the desired end state and concentrate planning around specific military objectives. This trend has been amplified by both the mentality of achieving QDV’s and the fascination with advanced technologies. Operation Iraqi Freedom clearly demonstrates that an objective focused approach does not automatically translate into achievement of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld, “A New Way To Treat The World.” *Parade Magazine*, (12 June 2005). <[http://www.parade.com/articles/editions/2005/edition\\_06-12-2005](http://www.parade.com/articles/editions/2005/edition_06-12-2005)> [7 May 2006].

desired end state. In order to bridge the gap from operational success to strategic victory, commanders must think in holistic terms. The theater strategic level of war demands that holistic operational art be used to synchronize all elements of national power. Dr. Antulio Echevarria of the Army War College notes:

One could well argue that the U.S. military ought not to dictate how the other elements of national power are to be used in conflict, since that knowledge lies outside of its expertise. As a profession, however, the U.S. military has the duty to think beyond the battle to understand war in its entirety, in all its various dimensions and stages.<sup>24</sup>

The need to understand the war in its entirety does indeed belong with the U.S. military. Moreover, theater-strategic commanders have to have the responsibility for implementing this holistic view. Currently, the military is the only organization with the capacity to plan in depth and at a level capable of incorporating all national assets. In addition to having the expertise and infrastructure, the military normally assumes the largest burden of man power during war. The future success or failure of America in wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will rely on holistic operational art at a theater strategic level translating national policy into victory.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation # 1: Insert Holistic Operational Art In All Joint Curricula**

This examination has provided a comparison of operational art in its current form and holistic operational art. The need to understand and focus on desired end states and to use all tools of national power to reach them is clear. The theater strategic level of war provides the bridge over the gap between national policy and military actions. Military commanders must realize and avoid the trap of objective based planning without a connection to the desired end state. In order to ensure commanders and their planners are aware of this divide, it is recommended that holistic operational art be added to the curricula for Joint Professional

---

<sup>24</sup> Echervarria pub.in McIvor, 75.

Military Education phase I and II. The module covering holistic operational art should use Iraq as a case study. Also, members from the Department of State, Department of Transportation, Department of the Treasury, International Agencies and Non-Governmental Agencies must be involved in teaching and round tables. These curricula must serve as the foundation for developing relationships and understanding that is absent today.

To ensure senior leadership is also aware of holistic operational art, the concept should be added to the Flag level Joint Force Component Commander courses. Each course currently focuses on the component duties for their own service. It is recommended that a second week be added to the course. This week should focus on holistic operational art and how different means of national power can be melded to achieve synergistic effects. This second week should include all of the above mentioned participants and all services. This recommendation needs to be implemented as soon as possible. Its affects will be both immediate and long term in realization.

**Recommendation # 2: Adopt a Scalable Command Structure That Enables the Synchronization of All National Assets**

To ensure theater-strategic commanders have the ability to coordinate all elements of national power, the correct command and control structure must be in place. There is currently a gap between national policy and military operations. Command and control that can act as the translation of policy across the full spectrum of operations is required. The level of conflict should determine where interagency coordination takes place. Currently, Joint Forces Command has implemented the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) as a way filling the gap between the military and other groups.<sup>25</sup> The problem with the

---

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command. "Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)." <[http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact\\_jiacg.html](http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact_jiacg.html)> [11 May 2006]

JIACG is that it mandates all interagency coordination below the RCC. This is a good plan for small conflicts and MOOTW's; but, in the case of larger conflicts, the RCC should reside as an element in a JIACG not the other way around. The proper long-term solution is a staff concept that is scalable to the level of conflict. For small MOOTW, the command and control of CSF 536 would provide a good model. For a major war that covered two or more regions, an Inter-agency Task Force (ITF) would be implemented.<sup>26</sup> The commander of the task force would be someone like the National Security Advisor. His ITF would have codes for the military component, state component, treasury component, etc... This proposed system gives formal structure to the ability to coordinate all elements of national power on a global scale. It also avoids some of the pitfalls of interagency disagreements by having them sit in a semblance of parity on a task force. A structure must be put into place that seeks the efficient, transparent and synchronized efforts of all elements of national power. This will ensure America continues to maintain stewardship of a globalized world with a trajectory towards stability and prosperity.

---

<sup>26</sup> This type of structure would require legislation akin to the Goldwaters-Nichols Act on an Inter-agency scale.

## Selected Bibliography

Bush, George W. "President Bush Addresses the Nation." White House, Washington, DC: 19 March 2003.

<<http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/print/20030319-17.html>> [05 May 2006].

Clausewitz, Carl Von. *On War*. Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Echeverria, Antulio. "Principles of War or Principles of Battle?" Edited by Anthony McIvor, *Rethinking the Principles of War*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005.

Franks, Tommy. *American Soldier*. New York: Regan Books, 2004.

Friedman, Thomas L. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Gordon, Michael R. and Trainor, Bernard E. *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*. New York: Pantheon, 2006.

O'Hanlon, Michael. "Iraq Without a Plan." *Policy Review*, no.128. (December 2004), <<http://policyreview.org/dec04/ohanlon.html>> [06 May 2006].

"Operation Unified Assistance: Aiding Tsunami Victims." *Code One: An Airpower Projection Magazine*, 20 no. 2. April 2005.  
<[http://www.codeonemagazine.com/archives/2005/articles/apr\\_05/operations/index.html](http://www.codeonemagazine.com/archives/2005/articles/apr_05/operations/index.html)> [07 May 2006].

Rosenfeld, Isadore. "A New Way To Treat The World." *Parade Magazine*. (12 June 2005). <[http://www.parade.com/articles/editions/2005/edition\\_06-12-2005](http://www.parade.com/articles/editions/2005/edition_06-12-2005)> [7 May 2006].

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. Joint Pub 3-0. Washington, DC: 10 September 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Joint Doctrine Capstone and Keystone Primer*. Washington, DC: 10 September 2001.

U.S. Joint Forces Command. "Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)." <[http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact\\_jiacg.html](http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact_jiacg.html)> [11 May 2006]

Wade, Norman M. *The Joint Forces Operational & Warfighting SMARTbook: Guide to Joint Doctrine, Operational Warfighting & Theater/Campaign Planning*. Lakeland: The Lightning Press, 2003.